



News Release

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS AND SITUATIONAL AWARENESS DEMONSTRATED

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Small Unit Operations Situational Awareness System (SUO SAS) provided soldiers with enhanced communications and situational awareness during a simulated rescue of a downed helicopter crew on October 15. The demonstration was held at the McKenna Military Operations in Urban Terrain Training Center at Fort Benning, Ga., and was designed to replicate the type of urban rescue situation that occurred in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993.

SUO-SAS brings jam-resistant situational awareness information and communications capabilities to mounted and dismounted soldiers on the forward edge of the battlefield. During the company-level operation, approximately 50 airborne, mounted and dismounted soldiers used SUO SAS equipment to maintain a common situational awareness picture and reliable, secure communications as they maneuvered through heavy forests and open areas and then entered a building within a mock city to rescue the downed aircrew.

Soldiers had constant access to voice, data, and geographic position information. SUO SAS used non-GPS techniques to provide the troops with precise geolocation information even inside buildings where GPS does not work. The geolocation information allowed soldiers to identify not only the building, but also the room and floor where the downed pilots were hiding.

SUO SAS also maintained a mobile communications network among the rescuing soldiers even as they maneuvered through the city. As the rescuers came closer to the downed air crew, the air crew's SUO SAS radio automatically joined the rescue team's network, providing the rescuers with the exact position of the aircrew.

The demonstration last week was the culmination of DARPA's six-year, \$100 million SUO SAS program. The Army is now considering the technology for use in emerging communications programs such as the Joint Tactical Radio System, Objective Force Warrior, and Sensors for the Objective Force.

James Freebersyser, DARPA's program manager, observed, "The SUO SAS program is a big win for DARPA and for the Army. Over the last six years, DARPA has developed technologies that will make a difference for our warfighters. The demonstration last week is

(more)

proof. We were able to take our equipment out and give it to soldiers, not engineers or technicians. And the soldiers were able to maintain communications and situational awareness in a difficult urban environment.”

SUO SAS was developed by ITT Industries, Clifton, N.J.

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Media with questions, please contact Jan Walker, (703) 696-2404, or jwalker@darpa.mil .
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